

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

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INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
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AMCONSUL HONG KONG
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E.O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJECT: STRAITS TIMES EDITORIAL ON U.S. AID TO VIETNAMESE
REFUGEES

FOLLOWING IS FULL TEXT OF EDITORIAL IN MAY 6 "STRAITS TIMES"
TITLED "US REFUGEE AID":

US REFUGEE AID

WHILE IN BANGKOK, THE AMERICAN VICE PRESIDENT, MR. WALTER MONDALE, HAS COME UP WITH A CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTION ON THE PROBLEM OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. HE HAS INDICATED THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE WILLING TO LEAD IN THE FINANCING OF A LONG-RANGE STUDY ON THE QUESTION. THE US WILL HELP DRAW TOGETHER AN INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM AND INITIALLY WILL ITSELF CONTRIBUTE US\$2 MILLION (\$\$4.66 MIL). THIS IS THE SORT OF PRACTICAL ACTION WHICH SHOULD ALLEVIATE THE PLIGHT OF THE FLEEING INDOCHINESE. BUT WHILE THE INTENTION BEHIND MR. MONDALE'S ANNOUNCEMENT IS LAUDABLE AND THE PROPOSAL A STEP IN THE RIGHT

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DIRECTION, IT CAN BE ASKED WHETHER MORE CANNOT BE DONE BY THE DEVELOPED NATIONS, LED BY THE US. GRANTED THAT THE AMERICANS HAVE AMONG RECEIVING COUNTRIES, PERHAPS DONE THE MOST, IS IT NOT POSSIBLE FOR THE US FURTHER TO ENLARGE ITS INTAKES OF REFUGEES AND TO MARSHAL OTHER LIKE-MINDED STATES TO DO THE SAME? IDEALLY, THE RECIPIENT GOVERNMENTS SHOULD INFORM AUTHORITIES AT TRANSIT POINTS THE NUMBERS THEY CAN GUARANTEE TO TAKE IN.

FOR THIS KIND OF A SYSTEM TO WORK, THERE MUST BE CONSULTATION AND AGREEMENT BETWEEN COUNTRIES SERVING AS STOPOVER CENTRES AND THOSE PREPARED TO BE FINAL RECEIVERS. THIS REQUIRES COORDINATION AND A GREATER SENSE OF SACRIFICE ON THE PART OF RECEIVING STATES. NO DOUBT THE PLAN WHICH MR. MONDALE HAS SAID THE US WILL FINANCE PARTIALLY CAN EXAMINE THESE ISSUES IN A MORE DETAILED MANNER, SO THAT THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED IN RESETTLEMENT CAN BE RESOLVED QUICKLY, THUS RESULTING IN LESS HUMAN MISERY AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE, PRESUMABLY, REACHED THEIR RESPECTIVE THRESHOLDS OF TOLERANCE IN THEIR OWN HOMELANDS. IT IS VERY APPROPRIATE FOR THE UNITED STATES TO LAUNCH THIS EFFORT WHILE MR. MONDALE IS IN THAILAND, WHERE THERE ARE SOME 100,000 INDOCHINESE LIVING IN CAMPS. THE US HAS PROMISED TO TAKE A TOTAL OF 25,000 REFUGEES, MOSTLY FROM THAILAND, SO THE REST OF THE RICH, LIBERAL WORLD HAS MUCH TO DO.

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